



## Senator Feinstein Hails Middle East Peace Opportunity December 1, 2004

**Amman, Jordan** – After separate meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said today that an “historic window of opportunity” has opened for making progress in the Middle East peace process.

**“Following the death of Yasser Arafat and with the upcoming election on January 9, there is an historic window of opportunity for reaching a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli peace,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“Abu Mazen (as Mahmoud Abbas is also widely known) is an impressive, decisive man who, I believe, wants to do the right thing. And Ariel Sharon recognizes that the time is right to deal with the Palestinians in an honest, direct manner.”**

**“I see a real opportunity and momentum for peace,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“It is imperative that the Bush Administration play a greater role in bringing the two sides back to the negotiating table.”**

The meetings were held during a two-day visit to Jerusalem and Ramallah, in the West Bank. Also participating were Senators Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), Joe Biden (D-Del.), and Lincoln Chafee (R-RI). In Jordan today, the Senators met with Jordan’s King Abdullah in Amman.

Senator Feinstein is a co-chair of the Aspen Institute Middle East Strategy Group. Other co-chairs include Senator Hagel and former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright, Palestinian businessman Samer Khoury and Israeli businessman Idan Ofer.

On Thursday, the Senators will be in Iraq, where a series of meetings are scheduled with General George Casey, General David Petraeus and Ambassador John D. Negroponte, and Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. A meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is scheduled for later in the week in Cairo.

Issues to be discussed with the officials in Iraq include whether there are enough troops in Iraq, the progress of the war against the insurgents and the upcoming elections scheduled for January 30.

**“I am also looking forward to meeting with troops from California,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“I hope to share with these men and women how much we value their heroism and commitment to our nation.”**

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